

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0373

INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

AMCONGEN JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN 1671

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, UN, XF

SUBJ: UNDOF EXTENTION

REF: USUN 1434 AND 1644

1. UN SECRETARIAT (LIU) HAS CONFIRMED REPORTS WE HAVE HAD FROM ISRAELI AND FRENCH MISSIONS THAT SYRIAN FONMIN KHADDAM TOLD USYG GUYER SYRIA WILL NOT REPEAT NOT AGREE TO RENEW UNDOF MANDATE WHEN IT EXPIRES MAY 31. LIU WAS AT PAINS TO PLAY DOWN REPORT'S SIGNIFICANCE, STRESSING THAT OFFICIAL SYRIAN VIEW ON MANDATE EXTENTION WOULD BE CONVEYED TO SYG IN NEW YORK. HE IMPLIED ALSO THAT UN SUSPECTED KHADDAM OF BLUFFING; SYRIANS HAD, HE NOTED, PURSUED SIMILAR CLIFF-HANGING TACTICS IN PREVIOUS MANDATE NEGOTIATIONS.

2. ISRAELIS HERE ARE ALSO TREATING KHADDAM'S STATEMENT (AS REPEATED TO GOI BY GUYER) WITH CONSIDERABLE SKEPTICISM. THEY BELIEVE SYRIA WILL AGREE TO TWO MONTH RENEWAL,
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AND HAVE ALREADY CONVEYED TO SYG THEIR POSITION THAT

DURATION SHOULD BE FOR AT LEAST SIX MONTHS, FOR SAME REASONS
ADVANCED WHEN UNEF WAS EXTENDED.

3. FRENCH MISSION'S REPORT FROM FRENCH CON GEN JERUSALEM
IS SIMPLY THAT MEMBER OF GUYER'S PARTY TOLD CON GEN WHAT
KHADDAM SAID, BUT ADDED THAT GUYER DID NOT BELIEVE HIM.
WHY GUYER DID NOT BELIEVE KHADDAM WAS NOT EXPLAINED,
BUT FRENCH HERE ASSUME IT WAS FOR SAME GENERAL REASONS
SUGGESTED BY SECRETARIAT.

4. AS FOOTNOTE TO ABOVE, SYG'S REPLY TO QUESTIONS
ON MAY 19 TV INTERVIEW ABOUT ME PEACEKEEPING FORCE
MANDATES MAY BE OF INTEREST. NOTING FIRST THAT SYRIAN GOVT
HAD NOT FORMALLY AGREED TO RENEW UNDOF MANDATE, WALDHEIM
NEVERTHELESS INDICATED THAT HE WAS EXPECTING CLARIFICATION
SHORTLY. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE DID NOT THINK A WAR
WOULD AUTOMATICALLY OCCUR IF THE TWO ME MANDATES WERE
TO EXPIRE TOGETHER IN JULY AND NOT BE RENEWED. BOTH SIDES,
HE ARGUED, WERE TOO INTERESTED IN FINDING A NEGOTIATED
SETTLEMENT -- EVEN THOUGH PROLONGATION OF MANDATES WAS
IMPORTANT FACTOR IN ME PEACE MAKING PROCESS. COMMENT:
THIS IS A CONSIDERABLY LESS GLOOMY VIEW THAN THAT TAKEN
BY WALDHEIM LAST DECEMBER WHEN SYRIANS THREATENED
NOT TO RENEW MANDATE. IT NOT CLEAR TO US WHETHER WALDHEIM
REALLY BELIEVES WAR IS LESS LIKELY NOW THAN BEFORE (AND
IF SO, WHY), OR WHETHER STATEMENT WAS DESIGNED TO DIS-
COURAGE USE OF NON-RENEWAL THREAT AS A BARGAINING COUNTER.
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